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**REGISTER**

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*Cover Design*  
*Duncan Coakley*

## Melissa's World

by D. C. Bandanza

The red brick, Victorian, South End townhouse ominously looms five stories high. Melancholy, acidic raindrops dampen the naive one's freshly washed hair. She scales the slimey steps as a mountaineer scales a mountain: hesitant at first, then faster as he gains confidence at the sight of the peak. She grasps the brass door knob and wrenches the oak door open and bounds into the foyer. A disco beat and the pounding of feet assail her virgin ears. Smoke from an unknown source assails her tender nostrils. She does not recognize the odor at first. It is either cigarette smoke or marijuana smoke or a combination of both. She scrambles up a foot wide staircase and hesitantly raps on a second oak door. Through a penny-sized opening in this door, a bloodshot, hazel eye peeps. Melissa, the hostess of the party, track star, and honor student, hastily cracks open the door and ushers the naive one into the livingroom-walnut-pannelled, book strewn, and Persian rug carpeted. An Akai receiver, Sony turntable, and four Jensen speakers screen an eighteen foot brick wall. "Let's groove tonight, share the spice of life," lyrics from a new tune, waft through the hazy, marijuana-scented air. Melissa awards the naive one a prepaid six pack of Molsons. The naive one casually sets the bottles on a Scandinavian designed end table. Beside this imported table, an overstuffed, leather couch cradles its lounging cargo. Three respected seniors, a cheerleader, a student council member, and a National Merit Scholar, slump together while draining a bottle of Reunite Rose. The naive one reflects, "Well, it is only one bottle of wine and three of them are sharing it. It's okay to drink-no it's not-yeah it is-no it's not. Well, they are only human."

On the dining room, in the center of which a ten foot long, oval, teak table obstinately squats. Above the table, a crystal chandelier glimmers faintly in the tainted air. Around the costly dining table, a dozen youths, toking a joint and playing "quarters", sprawl. "Hey do you want to play?" Janie, a National Honor Society member, invites. The naive one plops into a vacant seat next to Nancy, a Beacon Hill social butterfly. The naive one, guzzling two tumblers of Budweiser beer, decisively reflects, "Domestic brewskies are simply not my forte." She now views her decadent surroundings with a more liberal and open mind. As Melissa sparks up a jay, the naive one retrieves her six-pack, which an unknown guest has made a five-pack, and wanders up a flight of stairs to Melissa's bedroom. "God" the naive one ponders, "these kids are so smart they can afford to kill off a hundred brain cells every Friday night. They are probably too tense and need it to relax."

In Melissa's bedroom, two Panasonic speakers blast the Police's "Don't Stand So Close to Me", while Ashley, Brooke, Adam, and Julia-the preppy clique, dance, or rather bounce. In the master bedroom, Paula, who's going to Yale next year, and Scott, who's not going anywhere, share a joint. Paula casually comments, "This strawberry paper tastes wicked gross." In the corner of the master bedroom, two entangled bodies lie motionless. The naive one, now contently sipping a Molson, enters an adjoining bedroom. Marcia, the school hussey, simultaneously babbles on the phone and dribbles a Miller into Rex's abyssal mouth. Rex is Melissa's prize-winning Golden Retriever. Marcia, an ignorant and arrogant dolt, chugalugs an entire bottle of beer. The naive one ponders, "Why does Marcia drink? No matter what she does she'll always be a loser. God knows she doesn't have an overabundance of gray matter and she's wasting the little bit she does have. God, it really doesn't make sense at all."

The naive one strays back down the staircase into the kitchen. Paula, the future Eli, and Scott, the nobody, now tend a bubbling pot of cream of wheat. "How bizarre!" the naive one thinks. "Two plastered teenagers cooking a wholesome, all-American meal." As the naive one gazes at them, Paula and Scott devour the entire pot of the pasty muck. She settles down in a Bentwood rocker and nurses her third bottle of ale until the room begins to revolve. Thoughts, sights, and sounds coalesce and then clarify. Perhaps, she speculates, drinking is good for you. It allows you to see, hear, and experience things in a different light. It's good for you.

Now midnight, the not-so-naive one strays onto W. Natick Street's dimly lit sidewalk to await an older brother and a ride home. A fine mist clings to her canabis-scented locks. Life is exciting and full of surprises in the big city.

## Rush

*Rush, rush to get to class  
Rush, rush that test to past  
Brush, brush away childish fears  
Rush, rush to guzzle those beers  
Rush, rush to catch some cheers  
Gone, gone are childhood years  
—D. C. Bandanza*

## HAMLET CONCLUDES ACT II, SCENE II

Friends look to me with wonder spawned of fright  
As children who when demons flail their dreams,  
Scoot for the brimless bounty of those arms  
Which though stern and fast and hard in public,  
Where need of rule occasions icy gesture,  
Are nonetheless hallowed throughout the nurs'ry,  
When bolts are frosted tight and torches cold,  
For the thick ning calm of their chill-chasing hug.  
I mean my sire's arms. O unhappy ghost!  
Whose chalky look and fitful explanation  
Encourage me to blis'ring wrath most keen!  
Where be the magic comforts of your arms?  
Where now the gaudy quiet of your voice?  
Your once-accomplished tread of foot, where is't?  
Summoned am I now with graceless wave,  
Your speech too flat, a desert's level sands.  
Your every step effects a brutal changing!  
Be but the ruined remnant of my sire,  
The truth of whom lies rotting in the earth,  
Meat both for worms and other hobo beasts  
Who, til now, ne'er knew such kindly fodder.  
Rank evil gnaws at his festering bones,  
Spits forth his goodness into chamber pots,  
And, bloated at the last with soupy brew,  
Exhales the filth, sent hissing up to heaven.  
My lack of science counsels me to think  
Perhaps the population's stormed the Faith.  
Nature's aghast at my pledging to a shade.  
The day is false; the sun's a perfect traitor.

My youth, that used to be in form and thought  
Like to a loud bauble on a dandy's sleeve,  
Is now become a serious apparition,  
Hollow, scarce recalled, doffed but a day or two ago.  
The tumult of the hour's fray has mugged me,  
And yet no earthly lawman seeks the thief!  
Could it be the pest I search for is my father?  
O, that would prove the very end of saneness!  
I read the other night of curious Icarus  
Who, donning the waxen wings his father carved him,  
Soared near the sun, that darkly smiling disk,  
And looked about against his parent's wishes.  
The fiery eye entranced the luckless lad,  
Its seeming warmth and luring truth a snare  
Whereby the boy was snatched, his wings were  
sauced,  
And his body, like a grape wrapped in pudding,  
As true as to the physics of descent,  
Fell deep within the mesh of gelatin sea below.  
His father, undaring, was safe, and watched.  
Is there a hint therein for sons who dote,  
Like me and Laertes and Fortinbras the young?  
Am I devoted to an uncertain ghoul,  
which seeks to enroll my vig'rous strength in  
vengeance?  
Nothing is customary anymore;  
The vessel of the state does leak profoundly.  
So certain doubt shall anchor me to caution,  
And words I speak shall not mean what they say.  
I'll wager those around me, those that can,  
I'll yet be a princeling before I'm a wab!

—Luigi Bacari

## MACBETH TRIUMPHANT:

Exult, my worthwhile friends and truest comrades  
Terror has skipped at last, the air is scrubbed  
Of chewy words — cunning once in courtesy —  
Blasted to hell by nature's eye, the sun,  
Scurried by truth into endless limbo,  
So that once-startled brightness may rule again,  
And earth and all her ends — above, around, within—  
Of late so daunted by gagging darkness  
That morning was known only by tuneless dew,  
May respirate rightly as prelude to order  
And repair the nasty topsy-turveyed way  
Succored into being, this disheveling bombard,  
by the wielder of falsity and his oily wife!  
May handless clerics serve their haunted shades,  
Which like to wailing Ixion and Tantalus  
And their unassisting shoulderer of rock,  
Must terrify the frightful ghoul's of panic  
And know not any solace of the kind  
That lazy lamentation oft effects

When sinners together lambast their fate!  
More restless be their constant wakeful state  
Than the senseful alertness of the doe  
When she and her babes are heralded to care  
By the trudging paw of giant cat on twigs!  
This deer's mate and gentle fawns have perished  
And are tended to by glossy smiles above  
Where, safe from the raspy horror called Macbeth,  
' trust they slumber skillfully in peace.  
All hail to thee, my glazing sore-missed darlings!  
Your quick and sudden loss, so undeserved,  
Bankrupts the shining that is custom in me,  
Making my desire pale like death and, like dirt, poor.  
To remedy the which, let's kneel and pray,  
And urge the ground to righteousness once again!  
Let's toll an hour that's tolerant and true  
When yesterdays are truly past and hushed!  
Today let's trust once moe to honest sleep  
So tomorrow real hearts we'll grasp to keep.

—Luigi Bacari

## The Edge of Amber

*Here we stand at the edge of time  
Dark clouds fringed with crimson  
whirl about  
Hot winds, like invisible fires  
blow across the purple plain  
The horses move restlessly  
beneath us  
Their hooves mark the clouds  
and the dust swirls off  
the edge of the cliff.  
We plunge, falling, falling  
into the dark depths of  
the unknown,  
Gravity pulling us closer to  
the end, but we keep  
falling further and further in  
No beginning, no middle, no end.*

—Moirra McCarthy

## Al's Song

*i  
sit  
maybe  
but not always  
sometimes  
but never  
when everything  
is  
always  
really  
relative*

—Teresa Spillane



## “Attack”

by Elizabeth M. Hines

An evil snicker snaked up from the back of the room. Hortense nailed her gaze to the notebook on the desk, but the eyes in the back of her head fed a perfect mental image of what was going on. She knew exactly the manner in which the floppy-haired blond with the trowled-on rouge was bending towards the frizzy-haired blond with the industrial-strength mascara. She could picture their sly eyes, hard and glittery like marbles, and the smarmy, conspiratorial smirks twisting their mouths.

Well like, I'm psyched for the prom, aren't you? It's gonna be pretty good seein' who everyone goes with, huh?"

"Yuh, really. Especially the real myrons and dogs. Like, can you imagine who Hortense is goin' with? Hilarious, huh. Tom Selleck, maybe."

Evil laughter.

Hortense's face was experiencing a meltdown. One thousand degrees centigrade, two thousand, three! Explosion imminent! Her hands clawed at each other. A

voice from behind the girl's stinging eyes was asking, "What do you care, what do you care?" They don't know what they're talking about, they don't know who you're going with or that he's an excellent guy and true friend, and they couldn't appreciate him if they did. A wicked snattering, mixed with the sound of gum snapping, arose again. Why should you care, Hortense shrilled inside herself hysterically.

A kaleidoscope of possible future scenarios whirled in her mind. What should she do? She could confront them after class, tight-lipped and bristling, and exchange another round of insults; or follow through on an earless pose, and trip gaily by, strewing primroses and pigweed. She could turn to the girl on the left and discuss tacky, disgusting peroxide-bleached hair that reminded one of rotting corn silk. The bell rang and Hortense slid slowly out of the chair. Decide, decide! Confrontation, her soul shouted! She made a half turn, fled down the aisle and out of the room, through the crowded corridor, banging her hand against the lockers as she passed.

## Encounter

*Their paths crossed but once,  
And in their proud eyes  
The pity for one another  
Seemed, alas, no surprise.*

*One was dressed in silk and lace;  
She was a lady fine;  
Later on that evening,  
With princes she would dine.*

*With diamonds on her fingers  
And rubies on her ears,  
Pearls clasped at her throat, but  
Who said rich don't shed tears?*

*The other was a humble sort,  
Respectable and clean.  
Although she had "the most atrocious dress!"  
The lady had ever seen.*

*Her hands were worn from work,  
Her eyes were tired with age;  
But she had a serenity  
Unproportional to her wage.*

*The lady would soon return  
Straight to her mansion grand,  
Where filet mignon and caviar  
Were served by butler's hand.*

*The old woman would trudge  
To her apartment bare.  
She'd begin to cook up dinner  
And serve her family with care.*

*When the lady arrived she found  
No one home, dinner not arranged;  
A message on the mahogany—  
"Sorry, plans were changed."*

*The old woman saw family love,  
Her weary arms grew strong.  
She bent to kiss her young ones,  
Singing all along.*

*Their paths crossed but once,  
Coming out of a small store.  
Both of them were rich,  
But one of them was more.*

—Liz Siegal

## Unidad

*There is something united, dense, sitting in the  
background,  
repeating its note, its identical signal.  
Just as it is noted that stones touch time,  
in its fine substance there is the scent of age  
and the water that goes to sea, of salt and sleep.*

*This very thing is surrounding me, a single movement:  
the weight of its mineral, the light of the skin,  
beat against the sound of the word night:  
the tint of the wheat, of the ivory, of the groan,  
the items of leather, wood and wool,  
old, faded, united,  
are joined around me like walls.*

*I toil dully, even I, am turning,  
like the buzzard on death, the buzzard of grief.  
I feel, isolated in the most extreme part,  
like the center, whirled about by the silent geography:  
a continuous temperature falling from the sky,  
an extreme command of confusing unities  
unite themselves whirling about me.*

UNIDAD

Pablo Neruda  
translated by  
Danny Reardon

## uniform

*an age of anonymity  
cranks and cogs  
as numbers are we  
honor thy fathers  
make proud mother  
carbon copies  
cookie cutters  
individuality  
exists but hypothetically  
a term so stagnant  
grows aloof  
within society  
housed no proof  
intangible  
one cannot hold  
what can't be placed  
within the mold  
and what the mold  
can't hold won't be  
thus in with anonymity  
and individuality  
one may now see  
just cannot be  
accepting most  
assume the role  
in cadence  
barren tunnels stroll*

*Yet some will always  
From the norm,  
Deviate, thus brew the storm  
And loosen the bolts  
Laughing. . . .*

—Paul Runci

## Upon Review

oh  
OH

*I screech!!*

*they advance at astomshing speeds and the rear fender  
begins to vibrate they approach and in an infinite  
instant do they*

SCREECH!!

*Whew!*

*Catharsis!*

*Let's look out the window just you and me Solomon  
and see*

*what there is  
to see.*

OOOH LOOKIE,  
Sol!!

*There goes Mister Musicbelly —  
quite a funny old dude,  
eh Sol?*

*Hey you know what they say —  
that funny Mr Musicbelly listens to concertos at  
night. Solomon —*

*Believe it,  
or not. . .*

*And ZOWIE!! here comes  
Janet Gladiola Furiensis —  
(coed from some university)  
I heard she*

*(left home and ran to the city where she became the  
world's oldest professional —*

*ooh you  
KNOW what I  
MEAN??)*

*Oh ho I heard she's majoring in medicine,  
smark cookie, that JGF.*

*Hey hey hey it's old Mrs. Benjamin Franklin Jackson —  
Isn't she the one who,  
who,*

*(who feeds her pet fish the laundry detergent, who  
sticks her radio in the cuisinart, who  
cries by the firelight of her glory ridden chamber?)*

*Old old Old Missus B. F. Jackson —  
she comes every Thursday to our  
Meeting of the Minds. . .*

*Oh,  
Sol!*

*It's a beautiful day in our neighborhood!  
Won't you be my neighbor?*

*—Tracy Blackmer*

# Everyday Escape

*by Paul Runci*

It was hot. the air was stale and reeked of the lack of motion and moisture. He leaned back and slumped in his chair, wrenched at his tie and fanned himself with a stack of bound envelopes from the desk. People moved in the street below, and as he gazed down at them, suddenly he was no longer there; his tie swapped for a pair of long walking shorts and a madras shirt. He plunged into the water, whose frigid fingers stunned him. He sipped from the glass on his desk and watched the tiny drops of condensation bead together beneath his fingers; he felt his collar: it was open. Then he lay back and floated, observing the rich white tufts backed against the caerulean sky. His neck began to itch where his razor had chafed him and in the heat; it tingled like millions of little pins gathered about his chin. Endless papers lay in disheveled heaps about his desk; 3:22, an hour and a half left. He laughed inwardly at the thought of snow. "TIPS UP" the sign read. He slid off the lift and coasted to the top of the trail, marked by a black diamond nailed to a tree. The wind whipped his face and water welled in his eyes as the speed increased. He felt his balance begin to slip and . . .

"You O.K.?"

"Huh? Oh! Yes. Damn this heat though."

"I wonder if it'll ever break!"

The door slammed. He sat staring blankly at the stacks on his desk. "It'll never break," he thought. 3:30. He slumped in his chair, wrenched at his tie again. Then he looked out and plunged in, where it was cool.

## The Stairway to Greatness

*As I bounded up  
The stairs  
Two by two  
With Chubby thumping behind,  
I thought,  
Someday,  
I shall be President  
And Chubby will sit  
Beside me  
Smiling as usual.  
I reached the top of  
The stairs  
Triumphantly,  
And ran  
To my milk  
And cookies.*

—Rachel E. Adams

## DREAM

*Now that I sleep  
Sandman, bring me a dream  
With color, light and magic  
Where time has no meaning  
And fantasy is reality  
So that I may find escape*

—Arnold J. Kemp

## **“Alias Lisa Mason”**

*by Rachel E. Adams*

Lisa followed her mother habitually around the apartment.

... and don't forget to make a larger salad than usual — her mother was saying. Your father tells me that Uncle Don has gone on a vegetable kick."

I won't forget," Lisa answered vacantly.

Mrs. Mason picked up her gloves and tied her scarf securely under her chin. "What's the matter with you, Lisa?" she said. "You've been acting so tired lately. Matthew! Hurry up! We can't keep Aunt Susie and Uncle Don waiting all the time and your father's already in the car. That kid — I oughtta tie him to me! At least you're never any trouble, dear."

Lisa handed her mother the car keys.

"Ma! I can't find my other shoe!" Seven-year-old Nancy Mason entered the room with a sock-padded stomp.

Well, if you don't find it before your brother gets his act together, you can't come to the airport and see the big planes. God, I hate this!" Mrs. Mason took her lipstick out of her purse and squinted at the hall mirror.

"I'll help you find it," suggested Lisa quietly and the two of them went off towards the bedrooms. "Did you look under the bed?" Lisa asked.

"No."

The elder lifted the blanket and pulled out the lost article. "You'd better hurry," she said, "You don't want to be left behind."

"Tie my shoe," Nancy commanded and her older sister complied, as usual, without a word. "Ma! Mom, wait for me, I found it," and then she ran off to the front door.

Back in the hall, Lisa's mother gave her a few last minute cooking instructions, brushed her forehead with an absent-minded kiss and herded the other children out the door with a quick gasp at the time.

Lisa locked the door behind them and sighed. All was quiet again.

She stayed there a moment or two as if trying to remember something and then walked purposefully to the kitchen door. She stopped there, knit her brow and then leaned up against the doorway. Then, as if suddenly scared, she spoke: "Please, please, won't you leave me alone? Can't you see I just want to be left alone?" She turned to disappear into the massive mahogany hall that lay beyond the door, but a large, solid arm swooped down in her way. Her heart leapt and that deep, eloquent voice that she had recently come to know so well spoke now, with a new harshness.

I know who you are," he said.

Her whole body tensed and she turned to face her

solemn captor. The cat on the sofa blinked as though deciding that Lisa got stranger every day.

"What are you talking about?" she asked with as much innocence in her voice as she could muster. "Of course you know who I am. Why wouldn't you? Please, let me go."

"Not until you tell me why you are here — Miranda. . . " Miranda Winchester!" he shouted.

That was it. She was found out. Her cover had been blown wide open. What would he do now? What would Edward do. Would he expose her to the entire LeChatelier family including poor Pierre, the dumb invalid whose heart was so weak now that Franz the German groom and long-time friend of the family had for the past eight months been keeping him in total ignorance of the fact that his favorite horse Popcorn had been killed suddenly when the roof over his stall had mysteriously caved-in for fear that the news would be too much for him and he would croak leaving just his wicked half-sister Jeanette who was already plotting ruthlessly to murder him in cold blood with the breakfast-chef's kitchen knife which she had so carefully hidden in the secret safe behind the portrait of the late Francois LeChatelier (who was so notorious for his many lustful affairs) as the only surviving, sane heir to the complete LeChatelier fortune? Lisa shuddered at the idea. The cat rolled over and stretched.

But perhaps, Lisa, alias Miranda, thought, he would only — the phone rang. Lisa walked into the kitchen.

"Hello? . . . No, I'm sorry, can I take a message? . . . about 4:30 . . . O.K. I'll tell her. . . Bye." As she hung up the phone, she realized how recorded she'd sounded. True, sometimes her response varied slightly to "No, I'm sorry, she's (or he's) not home right now. Can I, etc." But however she said it, it always amounted to the same thing: she was usually home alone.

"What're you going to do with me?" she asked opening the refrigerator.

"I'm not going to do anything — yet," he said, "First you're going to tell me what you're doing here."

"I was invited," she said simply as she took the lettuce from the bin, "Is that hard for you believe? Some people do like me after all." As she reached for the largest salad bowl, Lisa realized that Miranda Winchester would never have to say something like that. Oh well, just part of her cover. . . . after all," she repeated.

"But they invited Marienne Sharpe the poor but beautiful country girl whose father had been killed by a highwayman leaving her and her family with no means to money since her mother was prone to fits of murderous rage and whose two remaining siblings had

recently been abducted by a man named Hank (who really wasn't all bad, just a little mixed-up because his mother used to tell him that if you looked up "stupid" and "ugly" in the dictionary you'd see his face) not Miranda Winchester the most intelligent woman in the civilized world who had once led a life of scams and cat-burglaries but upon having a deep philosophical discussion with a man who sat on the bank of a river with his pet goat had decided to use her absolutely astounding mind to thwart evil and protect and preserve all that was good and just!"

Miranda acknowledged this minor detail with a wave of her hand. She had decided that, at last, she would tell of the mysterious messenger who had come in the night. She would tell of the desperate note she had read squinting by the light of the clouded moon; the note which had so pathetically implored her help. Standing there now, she felt that this man, incredibly handsome and muscular as he was, might actually have the brains to assist her in uncovering the 'vicious plot that was lurking in this huge Victorian mansion. She proceeded to inform

him of her mission.

Just as she reached the part about Maggie the milk-maid's mysterious meetings, she was interrupted by the sound of keys and a seven-year-old crying at the front door. The vast shelves of wonderful books turned back into cluttered cupboards, the blazing fire turned back into a microwave oven, and the large, brilliant stained-glass window lost its magical colors and shrank about three feet on each side. She heard the chatting relatives start filing into the dining room.

"We're ho-me!" Mrs. Mason yodelled.

Lisa opened the oven slowly. She pulled out the turkey, put it on a tray, set a simple smile on her face and started for the door. "Just a minute, Monsieur," she said, "I'll be right back."

"No hurry," he said. "I'll be right here when you need me."

"Lisa walked through the living room past the cat, and into the dining room. As she greeted her relatives, they exclaimed at the size of the turkey and sat down.

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## Untitled

*I sit all alone  
No one to talk to  
For none have time to listen  
In a world full of deafness where  
All live with the piercing pain  
Of intimate laughter  
And naked with the cold edge of loneliness  
Among souls lost, confined, and searching. . .  
I sing, but my songs are mute  
I cry, but steadily I drown  
I dream, but I remain uninspired. . .  
I only want to be heard  
For someone to listen*

*Just once  
Without laughing  
Or turning away.*

*For who alone can bear  
The course of suffering  
Where no more can be endured?  
—Marcos T. Santos*

## DESERT FLOWER

*Alone not lonely  
With strength enough to survive  
I live on dreams  
Always asking for more  
Heat and barrenness  
Do not frighten me  
I'm far too used to pain.*

*—Arnold J. Kemp*

## The Hunt

*I tossed about by winsome gyre,  
See falcon's crest below me still,  
Glide t'wixt and t'ween aloft the spire,  
In path of untold trodden will.*

*Yet drift above the frozen plain,  
My windswept soul and I,  
Call out to Thee in gloried reign,  
To guide us, hither nigh.*

—Teresa Spillane



## THE END

*Mellow  
Melancholy blue  
Feeling feelings  
Like a worn out shoe  
Unable  
Incapable  
Of handling the roughness of the road*

—Arnold J. Kemp

## Requiescat in Pace

*Compliments. Smiling  
surprised faces  
and then  
the announcement  
too abrupt  
no matter  
the bluntness.  
The faces.  
The smiles  
Once wide  
then fall  
and offer  
an attempt  
at consolation  
with something  
like, "Oh,  
I'm sorry."  
They shuffle  
Their feet  
and add  
"Well, anyway,  
You look  
very nice."  
"Thank-you"  
I wish  
I didn't  
need to.*

—Rachel E. Adams

## THE DERELICT OF NEWBURY STREET

### I

*I feel your quick'ning stride while passing me,  
A guilt-like pace, as if you're late for church.  
I see the inch-brief glance you give the watch  
You did not wear today. I smell your haste  
Like penny wine spilled from a crystal carafe,  
Hear the hell-bound hymn of your oozing shame,  
And taste the breeze, glossed tart by the flurry  
Of your communion with all wrist watchers.*

### II

*I single you out and follow in your steps.  
You're used to running and so outrace me.  
You stop, irked, drawn to a nearby window,  
A rotund man's dusting off a David.  
I let you gaze (Your earrings, little bells,  
Tinkle neatly their golden clappers in your fuss.)  
And then with palm upturned without a word  
I challenge you to love me more than art.*

### III

*Through the window of the fat man's print shop  
I hear the rustle of your colorful bags  
And watch you spend your chance complaining of me.  
Your ally's lazy eyes dismiss me, too,  
His line-thin lips urge me to some bootstraps.  
So with care he wraps the David for you.  
I turn to go, my hands in my pockets,  
The only sound the peal of tolling gold.*

—Luigi Bacari



## The Stranger

*Stranger, Stranger,  
Wherefore art thou a Stranger?  
I would that you were  
some one else  
With whom I  
Nervous with the thought  
Could really tell  
Where I've been  
And what has  
Purely by chance  
(is a dreadful thing)  
Befallen me.*

*My life has been  
A secret to those who think  
But not really feel  
They know me  
All too well  
And you, a Stranger  
Could know all  
And not tell  
If I want  
To tell my life  
(has been very with me)  
To a Stranger.*

*A Stranger is  
Someone to whom we can't speak.  
Would it endanger  
A child  
To cry all  
To one who can't know  
The so-called truths  
of Parents?  
And let out  
to a Stranger  
(doesn't love you)  
What's in her heart?*

*Stranger, Stranger,  
Wherefore art thou a Stranger?  
I would that I could  
Tell to you  
About me  
But it's dangerous,  
So I understand,  
To let someone  
Know you are  
Anything  
But another  
(time I might just tell)  
Person's Stranger.*

—Rachel E. Adams

## “Blue Flash”

by Elizabeth M. Hines

Blue flash blue flash, blue flash. Where am I? What am I looking at? I feel like an unplugged appliance — I'm disconnected somewhere but I don't know where. I remember being in Paul's car, going eighty, the empties making a racket like a hailstorm in the backseat. Oh my God — let — zus — we crashed, that's it, it's flowing back. Oh Lord, the forever, forever, forever skid before the night disintegrated. Blue flash, blue flash, blue flash. Police sirens. I'm lying here on the ground, we've been in an accident. Why don't I feel anything? O hell, o hell, what the hell is wrong with me? The only thing I feel is this damn itch on my arm — my arm — No arm. A bloody stump. My arm is gone. Oh my Godddddd. . .

White light, white light, white light. Where am I? Who are those masked men? Beady black eyes staring over and under green surgical cloth, drilling into me. I feel all in pieces like a disassembled doll. Oh no. My arm. Is it or isn't it? I'm not gonna look. Don't look, don't look. Oh

God, it's gone. What am I gonna do? What are all those wires? Blood red, fly-wing blue, neon-yellow snakes, coiling and spitting sparks—coming out of what? What is that? It looks like—oh no, it can't be. This is a joke, right? A joke. Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha. GET AWAY FROM ME!

Sick green, sick green, sick green. Hospital walls. I'm in a hospital. Wait. The accident, the car, the doctors — Oh my God, my arm! Is it—? Wait, it's *there!* It's not gone after all, it was only a dream! I'm whole, I'm fine, I can get right out of the bed if I want to. If I want, I can get right out of this sucker and walk—four feet away? What the— Oh, of course. Why not? Four feet. The length of my extension cord. Here come the doctors, one, two three. What is it they have in their dainty hands? A 'Hallmark?' No, of course not. It's—Yes, you guessed it.

Batteries.

## Restraint

*There were questions being asked there  
and I  
attempted  
to mumble something and the  
others around me were doing the same.*

DICTION.

*friends,*

DICTION.

*If you have an answer  
(a solution to pure insanity)*

*explain*

*explain*

*explain. . .*

*Mumble.*

*This was all that could be heard —*

*There were  
mumbled cheers there were  
mumbled cries there were  
mumbled tears there were even  
mumbled sighs.*

*Every garbled exhalation — it was  
this that made it so clear.*

*There were two hands over each mouth there,  
and fingers on the tonsils.  
If you try to kill the hands you kill the speaker.*

*Society's hands — adorned with  
rings and painted nails,  
You know, it's too bad it has to be that way,  
Someone ought to fight it.  
bite through the palm and don't forget not to swallow  
the blood. . .*

—Tracy Blackmer

## untitled

*One day the computers made a fatal mistake  
and a nuclear launch they did make.  
Then the blood red bear across the ocean  
returned the fire in one final motion.*

*The common masses were not aware  
as death went streaming through the air.  
The President and the rich of the nation  
boarded a plane for a long vacation.*

*Businessmen argued over the cost  
of stocks that were already lost.  
A young child plays in the street  
ignorant of Death she would soon meet.*

*Trails of fire crashed in the sky.  
Flashing bright in the blind man's eye.  
Mushroom clouds shroud the land.  
Death dealt by the computer's hand.*

—Duncan Coakley



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## Whatever Happened Part II (The story drags on)

*Whatever happened to peace at hand?  
Where is Sgt. Pepper's lonely band?  
Whatever happened to Patty Hearst?  
Was she the best or just the worst?  
Where has Jimmy Hoffa gone?  
Why did Vietnam drag on?  
What were the papers of the Pentagon?  
Did your son die by a Vietcong?  
What did Hunt and Liddy find?  
Were Watergate's "plumbers" all in line?  
Was it love or was it hate?  
Did Manson kill sweet Sharon Tate?  
What was the groovy thing to do?  
Who did the establishment listen to?  
What was it that made the children high?  
Or was "Peace with Honor" just a lie?*

\* \* \*

—Corka

## Cruel Appendage

*Ruined cities, Ravaged land  
Mutant bodies, Mangled hand  
Palm burnt, Thumb missed  
Curled fingers, Clenched fist*

*Was it the one  
that hit the switch,  
that launched the fire,  
that rocked the world?*

—Duncan Coakley

## LIFE GAME

by Paul Laurino

My Paw alwuz said there weren't nuthin' good to schools. He said they just took a body away from work on the farm an' hard work's how a man should earn his livin' not wastin' his time readin' books. That's what Gordy's Paw said too. An' Corky's an' Virgil's. That's how us four came such good friends. 'Cuz as much as our Paws said school weren't any good, we'd hide in the bushes every mornin' an' watch the kids from town go to school, an' we'd wish we were them. One day when we were real little Virgil told us how he'd give his right arm an' lett leg to go to school. But Virgil didn't know his little brother was in the barn an' heard 'im. So when the little piker told, Virgil's Paw made 'im spend the whole day with the pigs in their sty. His Paw wuz gonna make him eat the hog's slop, too, he wuz so mad, 'cept he figgered with Virgil sick it'd just leave his chores undone. So after that we knew we alwuz had to talk in secret.

Virgil wuz the brightest one of us. He came up with most the ideas. He thought up the clubhouse. We built it out of wood, deep in the forest. There we could talk all about school without bein' caught. But after a while he said we could talk forever an' never get nowhere. It wuz time we did somethin'. Do what, we asked. Get books, he said.

So that next mornin', we went up to the school kids when they were in recess an' asked them if they could borrow us some of their books or get us some extras if they had any, an' we would give them somethin' for trade if they wanted. At first the school kids ignored us an' pretended like we weren't there. Then Corky went into one of his fits. The doctor said Corky wuz an 'epileptik' or somethin' an' had these things called "scissors," where he faints an' starts twitchin'. Well, Corky had a scissor right there, an' me an' Gordy an' Virgil wuz scared like we alwuz were when Corky had a scissor. But the school boys an' girls, they started laughin'. Then the boys started throwin' stones an' sticks at us, callin' us freaks and Ignor Ants. Gordy started shoutin' he weren't no ant or any other kind or bug, but Virgil said they weren't callin' us ants, but "ignorents," which means you're a farmer. Then the boys started laughin' more, throwin' bigger rocks. One hit Virgil in the left eye; now he can't see out it no more.

Gordy said there were a lot of books at the drugstore in town. Someone could just keep the owner busy while Gordy snuck a book off the rack to under his shirt, he said. First we weren't sure it wuz a good idea, 'cuz our folks had allowed us never to go to town. But, finally we figgered to risk it. An' it worked out real keen — only

once did our luck go bad. We wuz comin' out the store when we saw two school boys down the road. They seen us too an' started throwin' rocks at us. Then they sicked their two big Doberman dogs at us. We got scared an' started runnin' to the woods, but Gordy can't run too fast, an' the dogs wuz on 'im an' had 'im to the ground. One dog wuz chewin' at his ear, an' the other wuz tryin' for his throat. Virgil ran over an' kicked the dog hard in its stomach, so it fell down chokin'. But he didn't see the other dog jumpin' at 'im on his blind side. It got Virgil's hand in its mouth an' took the skin off his little finger. Virgil screamed an' put the dog out with a kick in its throat. We got Virgil home before he lost much blood. Later he told his folks he sliced the finger choppin' wood, so they wouldn't know we wuz in town. Afterwards, though, we wuz alwuz careful to look out for the school kids. But mostly we wuz pretty lucky — the old storekeeper never caught us stealin'.

Virgil wuz the only one of us who could read. His cousin had stayed over one summer an' she had learned 'im to write an' read in secret. Virgil tried to learn us to write an' read. Me an' Corky caught on sorta well, but Gordy couldn't make out at all, so Virgil gave up on us.

We picked the name for our clubhouse from our favorite story. We called it the Clubhouse of Usher. Each day we would go to the Clubhouse of Usher, an' Virgil would read to us aloud from a book, a few chapters a day. We learned all about faraway places like Africa, the North Pole, an' Camelot. An' about people like Joan of Arc an' Dracula. An' weird animals like kangaroos, elephants, an' dragons. Gordy said he bet an elephant could beat a dragon any day. All it'd have to do is spit water out its trunk an' put out the dragon's fire. I said that wuz foolish 'cuz the dragon's breath wuz so hot, it would steam away the water before it could get to him. Virgil said he wanted to visit the Cyclops, 'cuz he wanted to meet others that had but one eye like he. Corky said when he grew up he wuz gonna run away an' live in the underwater city of Atlantis. We didn't say nuthin', but we knew he couldn't live there, 'cuz epileptiks don't swim.

After we had read about twenty books, Virgil figgered that we had learned of so many places, peoples, an' things, that we were about the smartest kids in the county. An' Gordy said that as long as we kept readin' even more books, we'd know enough about the world around us that when we were growed up, we could run off, just like Corky, an' go to our favorite places to live real lives, like the ones we read of in books, an' not the

ignorant farmin' lives, like our Paws wanted. After that, we wuz alwuz excited about goin' into the real world when we growed up. Once Corky said he wuz worried 'cuz he'd seen the books the school kids had, an' those had hard covers, but ours had paper covers. He said he even got a quick look in one of the school books an' didn't see no quotashen marks in 'em like ours. He thought maybe our books wuz different than school books. Me an' Gordy laughed. I said books is books no matter if they got hard covers or soft covers or quotashens or whatever. Our books is just like school ones, I said, an' Gordy said I wuz right. An' then he asked Virgil that wuzn't I right.

"Don't never talk about the school kids in front of me for ever again," he shouted at us.

We all got quiet, then said we wuz sorry. Sometimes we forgot how much Virgil hated the school kids.

Virgil wuz real keen; he wuz alwuz thinkin'. So a couple of months later he said he had another idea. He said by readin' we were learnin' how to act an' carry ourselves in the real world, but readin' weren't enough. He told us how when we wuz little, even though his Paw told 'im everything how to ride a hoss, the minute he got on a hoss for the first time, he fell off. Virgil said he only learned to ride by keepin' on ridin'. He said it wuz the same for us. Unless we practiced what we learned from the books, all that readin' wuz for nuthin'. So his idea wuz that after we finished each book, we'd act out what we read an' that would be like our practice for livin' in the real world when we growed up. He said to make it fun, it would be like a game. Corky said call it Life Game, an' we said yeah.

Then we asked Virgil what the rules were, an' he said he wouldn't tell us 'til it wuz time to play the game. We said that weren't fair 'cuz what if we don't like it. But Virgil promised it be the best game we ever played, with really good detail, just like real life.

We'd just finished this book called *The Three Musketeers*. Virgil said it wuz a real keen book to play our first Life Game about. He said to play the game best, it needs as good detail as possible, so first we all needed names. Virgil wuz 'D'Artagnan,' I wuz 'Aramis,' Gordy wuz 'Porthos,' an' Corky wuz 'Athos.' Then Virgil said we had to have spritzzy clothes, too, like capes an' hats with feathers. Gordy said he could get that stuff, 'cuz he knew a tailor in town he could steal from easy. Corky said he could get the hosses, 'cuz his Paw had dozens of 'em. Virgil said him an' me would get the weapons then. So it wuz all settled.

It wuzn't hard for me to find stuff to make the weapons. There wuz a lot of scrap iron from broken plows an' useless tools that wuz lyin' around my barn. Virgil had the same luck as me, but it took Gordy a couple a days to do his part. He couldn't find no feathers. Finally he snuck into his Paw's coop when no one wuz around an' got 'em from a hen.

At Thursday noon we all met at a Clubhouse of Usher. Virgil said w would all meet in the clubhouse early the next mornin', an' then Virgil would tell us the game, an' we would play. So we put all the clothes an' swords in the clubhouse for overnight, an' told Corky to remember the hosses for tomorrow. An' then we went home.

If you can think how excited I wuz waitin' to see what the game wuz goin' to be like, you can think how sore I got when I found I couldn't go. A rattler had bit our ox in the leg, so it couldn't pull the plow. My Paw said he'd have to pull the plow hisself, an' that would take all day, so I'd have to do his other chores. I wanted to tell 'im it'd take me to sundown to do his an' my chores, an' I couldn't make the time. But I knew if I did, I'd be spittin' teeth for talkin' back. So I ran to Virgil's to tell 'im I couldn't play tomorrow an' could he change the game to another day. But he said Corky couldn't get the hosses but tomorrow. But I shouldn't fret, he said, 'cuz we'd be playin' the game again next week on *Robin Hood*, an' I could play then. I figgered that wuz all right; I could stand to missin' the game once. Then I said could Virgil tell me the rules now. But he said to wait, 'cuz I'd find out soon enough.

The next mornin', after breakfast, my Paw figgered he wuz too full for heavy work, so he took to feedin' the chicks an' stackin' the hay an' gave me to pushin' the plow. I didn't finish til it wuz dark an' then fell into bed feelin' near dead. In the kitchen I could hear my Paw gruntin' cuz' Ma wuzn't back from town yet with food for supper. Paw alwuz got angry when he wuz hungry. Inside of me I could feel how much I hated my life an' couldn't wait 'til I could go away an' live the real life of educated people. Then the front door banged open.

"Where's my boy? Where for the Lord's my boy?" I heard my Ma scream.

I went to the kitchen, thinkin' she wuz plannin' to beat me for somethin', but I couldn't think what I might of done wrong. But when I seen her, I seen there wuz tears in her eyes. An' when she saw me her face suddenly brighted. She ran to me an' hugged me, cryin', "Thanks to God you're safe. I wuz so scared. I thought you wuz outside somewheres. Thanks to God you're here."

Get off the boy. You turn 'im into a sissy, cryin' over 'im like that," my Paw said.

She kissed me some more, an' then she got up an' locked the door. "It's just I wuz so scared," she said. She came back to me, an' Paw said that wuz her reason for such carryin' on.

I wuz at the store," she said, "when some townsmen came in. They said they found a couple of school boys in the woods, two of 'em, lyin' on the ground. They'd been

trampled on by hosses an' been run through by weird pieces of iron. They wuz both dead. The townsmen were lookin' to start a posse, but all I could think wuz my boy might be outside while some madman's on the loose butcherin' children. Thanks to God you're all right."

She started huggin' me again. But even though she held me real tight, she couldn't keep me from shiverin' as I realized how much detail Virgil had put in the game.

---

### One Incredibly Bright Morning by the Side of a Bed

*The white  
twine*

*around her neck she resembled a shopping bag,  
she looked more like a gift than a corpse, she did.*

*There was a red ribbon in her hair,  
it was in her hair and on her wrist and under her  
tongue now, and she had only just bought it  
yesterday!*

*What a shame!*

*Ooh and the  
cotton dress  
with the slit*

*up the side  
up the front  
up the back*

*and in between,  
(they had torn her dress  
her soul  
her dress  
her soul  
her dress*

*HER SOUL TO SHREDS!!)*

*There was a goldfish swimming over by the  
coffee table near the orchid,*

*still afloat,  
as she looked on with eyes —*

*oh!  
with eyes that would never see, with eyes no  
longer! with peanuts!  
oh! that  
hideous instant.*

*The white twine  
hisses like a snake, slides and tightens its grip.  
ooh but wasn't it worth it???*  
—Tracy Blackmer

### Influenced Voyage

*Falling silent, eyes aglaze  
A shrouded spectre in the haze  
An owl screeched, a child fled  
Then stood, like marble-speckled red  
It grew, and darkness preyed  
Upon their simple mind it flayed*

*Stifled scream erupts inside  
Mighty rhino beneath the hide  
Charging down upon his bones  
Under him pebbles and stones  
Fly and crash down on salty shores  
Pound his brain, til he abhores  
The liquid splashing through his veins  
Which scars him with wretched pains  
Running from the truth trying to steal  
Into another world forgetting the real  
No more cares about everyday kicks  
As long as he can get his fix*

—Duncan Coakley

## HARVEY'S

by D. C. Bandanza

The neon sign outside of Harvey's Deli flickers in the glowering noon sun. As you shuffle hesitantly into the dimly lit, surprisingly crowded, and smoke-filled diner a revolting odor attacks your nostrils. A mixture of perspiration, sour milk, mildew, and mold pervades the atmosphere of this tiny deli. On the right, several flimsy, plastic tables with matching, equally tacky chairs, line the grease-stained, yellow wall. Remnants of previous diners' sandwiches spot these sticky, film-covered tables. Your feet stick to the gritty and slimey linoleum floor.

To the left, the showcase stagnates. The grease covered glass barely reflects the dim light emitted by a single light bulb. Several metal boxes of yellowed, paper napkins, grease-spattered plastic forks, and a crank-style cash register all sprawl on the greasy surface of the nauseating showcase. Within it, a garbage monger's paradise exists. On the left, a salad of rotting lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, and celery withers beside a rusty, tin container of slowly spoiling potato salad. To the right of these, several brownish wedges of cheese corrode in the steamy encasement of the glass showcase. Beneath their sweaty, plastic wrappers, Swiss, American, cheddar, and Roquefort cheeses sour. On the right side of the repulsive cheeses, the cold cuts gradually decompose. A flesh-colored, slimey ham, a tepid side of bloody roast beef, a hard grayish salami interspersed with doughy blotches of fat and an enormous block of bologna — all excrete huge droplets of cloudy condensation. At the end of the rough, chipped counter, lies a sharp, steal-bladed butcher knife, encrusted with day-old, dried blood. The continuous buzz of disease-bearing flies and the beating of the dense smoke-filled air by a pea-green plastic, overhead fan gives you a migraine. Finally the sickening atmosphere of Harvey's forces you to scurry outside to bask in the warm sunlight at the local open-air-cafe style in McDonald's.

## Thanksgiving

*Stomachs stuffed,  
Thirteen strong,  
In body, mind and voice,  
A low murmur  
Volume rises  
Sounds leap up,  
Hover,  
Drop,  
Mother, Dad,  
Sisters, Husbands,  
And five grandgirls  
Family gossip,  
Football,  
Weather,  
"You were always outspoken,"  
"Not half as loud as you!"  
Conversation bounces,  
Bumps,  
Collides,  
"What a game, good defense"  
"Player of the year, he saw that opening and ran!"  
The competition is stiff  
Confusion builds  
Voices rise  
"Who? Oh, I never liked mustaches."  
"He's got bedroom eyes."  
Others shout,  
Laugh,  
Argue,  
And when a lull . . .  
"What are you guys doing down there?"  
We're whispering."*

—Christie Thomas



## On Imagining the World Without Her

*It could my life as my Father were to take  
The object of my earthly love away  
My heart like gleaming glass dashed down, would  
break  
And I in tears with darkened words would say:  
O sightless God how wrong to rob from me  
The brightest light that in my life did shine!  
How blind to mortals love your eyes must be  
It hand that stole her life away was Thine!  
Time will go on, but ne'er again as one  
Will join the fragments of my shattered heart,  
Which sparkling glass-like, did outshine the sun  
Ere we by your cruel hand were forced to part:  
My crushed crystal heart, kept from her light,  
Lies dark and black; twill ne'er again be bright.*  
—John Denninger

## Untitled

*Why do you try  
to make words rhyme?  
The song of the bird  
is just so absurd.*  
  
*Feelings lie in hearts  
not the stanza's parts*  
  
*reach out to touch  
don't hold the crutch  
which says the poem  
must have a rhyme.*  
—Wing

## G. F. Handel: Suite No. 5 in E Major

*Trilling quickly  
It winds around all the hills  
I can imagine,  
In and out  
Of the sky,  
Lightly and freely;  
It fills my heart  
With the sounds  
Of a true  
Celebrated love  
(is all consuming)  
Finally come real.*  
—Rachel E. Adams

## Silvan chorus

*Dark cloudy night  
Owl calls the moon  
Crickets play small violins  
in quiet harmony  
thunder crashes  
ending the symphony  
Rain patters on the ground—  
A wild delicate sound*  
—Duncan Coakley

## Scott Joplin: 'Country Club' in Key of C

*Nimble fingers  
Having their favorite kind of fun  
Dance along the board  
From key to key  
Whilst the heart of  
Their young master  
Fills with joy,  
Free from care  
Of anything  
(Painful has left him)  
But his music.*  
—Rachel E. Adams

## Audio-Video War

*War films on the screen-  
Most are dirty, none are clean.  
Children, naked starts to wail.  
The devil's wrath will never fail.*

*Marching feet pound the street  
Goosestep jive to a monotone beat.  
A hollow drum cries aloud.  
Young cringe beneath a shroud.*

*Dive-bombers scream like living hell,  
Dropping flames in a metal shell.  
Senseless battles won or lost-  
Generals for glory, forget the cost.*

*A young soldier crouches near  
To save his head, to hide a tear.  
A lone body sprawled on the plain-  
A mere pawn lies here slain.*

*Brilliant yellow, crimson red  
Attack the senses in your head.  
Loud, tall mushroom cloud,  
Screaming millions are not proud.  
—Duncan Coakley*

## Vuelta de Paseo

*Murdered by the sky,  
among the forms that approach the snake  
and the forms that search for the mirror,  
I will let my hair grow.*

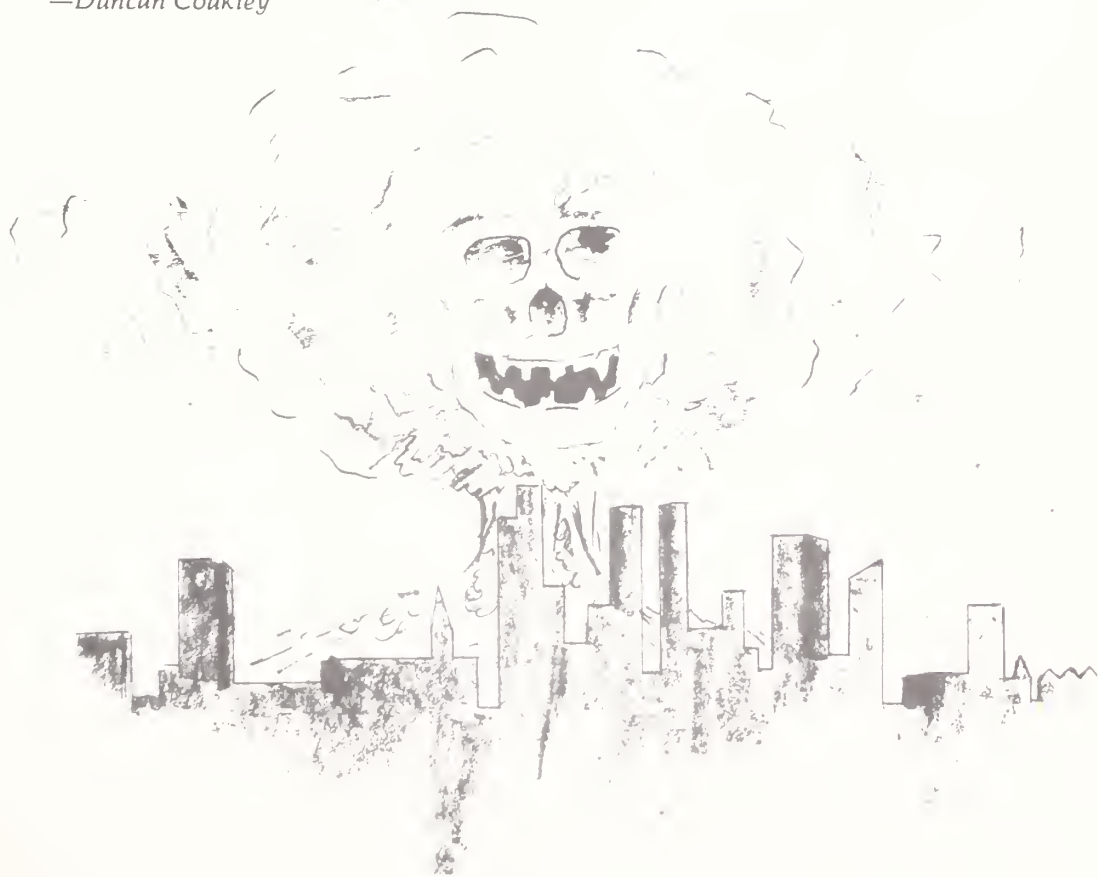
*With the tree of stumps that does not sing  
and the child with the blank face of an egg.*

*With the little animals with their heads torn off  
and the water disturbed by feet kept dry.*

*With all the weariness that a deaf mute feels  
and a butterfly drowned in an inkwell.*

*Stumbling with my face distinct each day,  
Murdered by the sky!*

*Vuelta de Paseo*  
Federico Garcia Lorca  
translated by  
Danny Reardon



## Patience

*A few minutes  
Can be a long time  
When waiting.*

*In fact, minutes  
Can even take hours  
When waiting.*

*Anything can  
Happen in minutes  
Even death.*

*A few minutes  
Can be a long time  
When waiting.*

*But in minutes  
One can dream of things  
To fill space.*

*Things that fly  
Up with the clouds  
Beside you.*

*In just minutes  
One can be something  
Impossible.*

*It's even time  
Enough for finding  
Peace within.*  
—Rachel E. Adams

## Quel Enfant

*Pretending progress  
I regress  
Mocking maturity  
I stagnate  
Drifting days  
I survive  
Simulating sincerity  
I smile  
Tackling tomorrow  
I ignore  
Insinuating infantile  
I laugh, I cry.*  
—D. C. Bandanza

## To Freud and Friends

*Smiling,  
Sitting,  
Slouching,  
Squirming,  
Swimming,  
in golden hour tears,  
Drowning,  
in long forgotten fears.*  
—Teresa Spillane

## To an Absent Lover

*My walking led me through the woods today;  
My love, what wond'rous beauty met mine eyes!  
The sinking sun stood still and lit my way,  
His golden arms stretching far through the skies;  
And as his glowing fingers reached the trees,  
Each leaf was gilded by his touch in turn,  
And fluttered, gleaming greenly, in the breeze,  
'Till ev'ry one with cool mock fire did burn.  
As taken as I was with this display  
Of Nature's blinding beauty, bold and bright,  
My joy was not complete, since you're away  
In foreign lands and could not share this sight.  
For ne'er so dazzling is the fi'ry sun,  
As when our flaming hearts do blaze as one.*  
—John Denninger

## Untitled

*I dreamt last of an overturned boat  
Lying still beneath the water;  
I fancied then that someone beckoned me,  
Someone not held under, but trapped within  
That boat.  
Slowly, yet curiously eager  
I moved down each stone step  
Toward this sunken rotted mass.  
"What want you?" Cried I  
"Disturbed you me from my peaceful home  
And brought me into the cold?"  
Silence was my answer.  
I sought my mind for telling pictures  
And racked my musty memory.  
Was it I who had sunk  
This boat?  
Had I carelessly neglected to rope it  
as I put it aside  
That it would not drift from my reach  
And then, having drifted, had it been tossed  
over and over  
Finally tired enough to let go the fight?  
Nay, thought I,  
It be no boat of mine.  
My boats are safe, sound and, as always,  
secure.  
I waited again in silence.  
After only minutes of infinity, I spoke again, firmly.  
"Did you call me? Are you there?"  
I heard no verbal message  
yet I felt the answer crawl within my stomach;  
I had forgotten something,  
And it was making itself reknown.*

*I edged closer to the water  
as though pushed by the hollow wind,  
but still I dared not peer too closely at  
The boat.  
I made my eyes to see only the waves  
That splashed about and obstructed my vision.  
Occasionally I caught glimpses  
of this fine vessel  
once meant to keep mortal souls from joining  
The masses gone before them all the same,  
But mostly I watched my hands  
Or closed my eyes.  
Of sudden I was jolted, I heard a cry,  
A heart-wrenched, yearning, cry for freedom.  
I glanced quickly at the boat for explanation,  
Saw nothing I could understand,  
And realized the cry had been mine.  
"You are a sunken boat" I yelled  
"You are battered and old, you're of no use to me!"  
But my pain only strengthened.  
"Set me free!" a lonely voice weeped  
And desperate, I shouted, "Please!  
I do not know you!"  
Bending suddenly, at least determined to see this  
tortured soul  
Taken captive by the heavy freezing water  
I started at the not so mere sight of  
myself.  
Openly weeping at last  
I felt strangely joyous and whole,  
And the boat, new and sturdy,  
Rose to the surface of its captor.  
—Rachel E. Adams*



## ENOUGH SILENCE

*This hill*

*This hatetui mountain I am climbing  
It grows and tightens as I climb.*

*For longer than I can think of now  
I have been climbing.*

*I may have been for my whole life  
—for as long as I've been alive—*

*But I don't know.*

*Time is a black sky that leaves me questioning the  
sun.*

*It grows, hurling dark avalanches.*

*My destination rolls over me, bruising my body and  
Casting me back onto trails I have already walked.*

*Again on my feet, I ache onward.*

*Just before the dawn of a million days.*

*It begins to rain.*

*For so long it rains that I can no longer  
Remember*

*A time when it did not. I only feel*

*There must have been one.*

*I am lost in the rain and can't know if I cry.*

*It grows. And through the rain,*

*I see a trail joining mine.*

*I crawl, laughing and crying to the place*

*Where the trails become one.*

*I wait and try to distinguish*

*The blackness of night from the blackness of day.*

*I am cold but I sit*

*And wait for the climber I know must*

*Cross my path.*

*Sometime in the blackness, I sleep.*

*And when I wake I find that my climber has left me,*

*Mistaking my sleep for peace,*

*Covered with a blanket which he thought would make  
me warm.*

*Sometime while I slept, every hope I ever had*

*Covered me silently with a blanket and, stepping  
carefully*

*Over my breathing body, continued its journey.*

*And the mountain grows.*

*It stopped raining on a day that must have been  
Yesterday.*

*And I looked up my trail, I fixed my eyes on*

*The infinite, earthy path and I crawled.*

*Suddenly, everything was white and I stood.*

*My eyes were filled with a new blindness.*

*The earth on the sides of my trail was heavy with the  
growth*

*Of a soaked forest.*

*I knew not why I had climbed and*

*Upon realizing my ignorance,*

*I turned and fled down the trail which for so long*

*Had been my existence.*

*Running as never before,*

*I lost myself and tumbled down*

*The trail that had been my beginning and end.*

*I awakened at the bottom of my mountain*

*In the midst of a great crowd.*

*Wanting to tell them of my beginning and end;*

*Of the blackness that was all I could see,*

*And the rain that was all I could cry,*

*And the cold that was all I could feel,*

*I pointed to my mountain and cried, "Look."*

*And they turned.*

*And my mountain was gone.*

*And they laughed.*

*And I grew.*

*—Lori O'Dea*



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